

AGENCY NAME: Town of Amherst  
 AGENCY ADDRESS: 4 Boltwood Avenue, Amherst, MA 01002  
 AGENCY PHONE NO: (413) 259 - 3040 CONTACT PERSON: David Ziomek  
 2011 CDBG REQUEST: \$25,000.00

**Cover Sheet – Non-Social Service Activity**

1. Project Name: *Housing Production Plan and Market Study*
2. Project Description (1-2 sentences)  
*The Town proposes to hire a consultant to complete a Housing Production Plan and Market Study that meets the requirements of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).*
3. Project Location: *Town of Amherst.*
4. Budget Request: *\$25,000.00*
5. Type of Activity (check one):
  - ☐ Rehabilitation
  - ☐ Acquisition
  - ☐ Demolition/clearance
  - ☐ Infrastructure
  - ☐ Public Facility
  - ☐ Architectural Barrier Removal
  - ☒ Other – please explain: *Planning Activity to benefit low/ moderate income persons*
6. Demonstrate Consistency with Community Development Strategy  
*The Community Development Strategy identifies affordable housing, housing for homeless individuals and workforce housing as a priority reflected in the master plan.*
7. Demonstrate Consistency with Sustainable Development Principles  
*2. Advance Equity: Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning and decision making to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice.*  
*6. Expand Housing Opportunities: Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types.*
8. Demonstrate Consistency with Target Area requirements  
*Ultimately, this plan and study will provide strategies for increasing housing opportunities in the Town Center and village centers.*
9. National Objective  
*Benefit to low- and moderate-income persons*  
*Estimate the number of low- and moderate-income persons to benefit from the Project:*  
*To be determined, but beneficiaries will meet low- and moderate-income guidelines.*

**Please submit responses to the following questions:**

Project Name: *Housing Production Plan and Market Study*

Project Location: *Town of Amherst*

Census Block Group: *N/A*

**A. Please describe in full the project for which you are requesting funding:**

Include information on the number of individuals or families to be served and who they are, i.e. disabled, low-income, homeless, etc.

*The Town of Amherst is requesting funding to hire a consultant(s) to complete a Housing Production Plan (HPP) and Market Study that meets the guidelines established by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). A state-certified plan ensures that Amherst will be producing housing that is consistent with the Chapter 40B statute and regulations—the plan sets housing goals that must be achieved for the Town to remain certified. By following the plan, Amherst will increase housing opportunities, both ownership and rental, for low and moderate income persons, homeless, disabled and will have strategies for meeting the housing needs of the elderly and workforce housing.*

*The HPP includes a comprehensive housing needs assessment for the community by examining who currently lives in the community, demographic trends affecting future growth, existing housing stock and future housing needs. The plan will also determine affordable housing needs in the community for various demographics (homeless, low/mod income, and elderly), will assess the feasibility of rehabilitating the current housing stock, and will contain implementation strategies for the town to meet 5-year goals. The number of individuals or families that can be housed, however, has yet to be determined.*

**B. What is the community's need for the proposed project/program?**

Define the need or problem to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain why the project is important. Provide evidence of the severity of the need or problem. Who are the affected population and why is this population presently underserved or not served?

*The Town of Amherst has worked diligently to maintain its affordable housing stock and has produced various planning documents to help gauge the housing needs of the community. However, those plans are almost a decade old and were never comprehensive in nature; Amherst has never completed a town-wide housing needs assessment and market study. The cost of living in Amherst, as evidenced by the median home value of approximately \$330,000, far exceeds local annual wages that average \$55,000. The cost of a single-family home is beyond the means of the general workforce,*

*and much beyond the means of low and moderate income persons and families, especially the homeless. In order to create housing that meets specific needs of the community, the Town needs to engage in planning efforts to quantify and critically examine the housing needs and demographics in Amherst. Over half (11 of 19) of the Town's Census Block Groups have a population that is 51% or more low and moderate income. These figures indicate there is a general need for more affordable housing, but do not show the specific demographics and housing types necessary to effectively increase housing opportunities for Amherst residents—a housing production plan will provide this much needed information.*

**C. Community Involvement:**

What process was used to select this particular project? How was the process responsive to expressed community need?

*The Housing Partnership/Fair Housing (HP/FH) Committee, Committee on Homelessness, Amherst Housing Authority and various other local organizations and Town boards & committees have for years requested funding to increase affordable housing and housing opportunities in Amherst. The HP/FH Committee also voted unanimously at their October 14, 2010 meeting to support the development of a housing production plan because it is a much needed document that will provide guidance to the Town as it strives to increase housing opportunities. The last significant effort to document this need occurred in 2003 with an update to the Town's Affordable Housing Plan. The recent master planning process, which involved hundreds of volunteers and spanned almost two years, also identified increasing housing opportunities for low and moderate income as a high priority for the community. Implicit in the many goals and strategies of the Master Plan that called for increasing the diversity of housing to meet the needs of different segments of the population, is a process by which those needs are thoroughly documented—this is the housing production plan.*

Define the process that will be used to maintain involvement of the project beneficiaries in the implementation of the project.

*Town staff, boards and committees, and the low- and moderate-income community will be involved through meetings, public forums and at public hearings when formal presentations are made by interested parties.*

#### D. Project Feasibility

The project impact will be evaluated upon the extent to which the response meets the following criteria:

1. Describe what evidence exists to show that the community at large or project beneficiaries will use the project. Include documentation of demand for the activity through summary descriptions of surveys, inquiries, waiting lists or past participation.

*The Town's recently completed Master Plan calls for, and is synthesis of various strategic plans—Open Space and Recreation Plan, Preservation Plan, Affordable Housing Plan, to name a few—that need to be continually updated to stay relevant and effective. Town staff, as well as boards and committees, use these strategic plans to help achieve the goals of the Master Plan. A comprehensive housing study and market analysis will serve the Town by guiding policy decisions, land acquisitions, and the development of affordable housing. The need for affordable housing cannot be stated more clearly than the recent waiting list of over 200 households (single individuals and families) applying for 11 units of rental housing at the Amherst Housing Authority's Main Street project completed last year..*

2. If applicable, describe and document the availability and source of matching or other funds needed to complete the project.

*At this time there are no matching funds available for this project.*

3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of all personnel involved in the project as well as internal controls.

*Town staff from Conservation and Planning will be responsible for working with relevant boards and committees (i.e. Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee) to develop a scope of work, select the consultant(s), and comply with all procurement and CDBG regulations.*

4. Citing past accomplishments, document that the agency has the necessary past expertise to conduct the activity and has successfully completed past activities in a timely manner.

*Town staff has considerable experience working with consultants to develop plans and assessment reports.*

5. Please submit a program budget that includes all sources of revenue and all expenses.

*The budget consists only of the consultant costs, \$25,000, to complete the Housing Production Plan and Market Study.*

6. Please submit a time line with milestones, including a start and end date that demonstrates that this project is feasible (will be complete) within 18 months.

*The Town will follow the procurement regulations and sign a contract after successful bidding and consultant selection. The terms of the contract will include a scope of work that details project deliverables, and a timeline stating that the project will be completed prior to the 18 month deadline. It is expected that the Housing Production Plan will take no more than 6 months to complete.*

7. Please identify the staff that will be directly responsible for implementing this activity.

*Town staff from the Office of Conservation & Development, including conservation and planning, will be responsible for implementing this activity.*

#### **E. Impact**

Describe the impact the activity will have on the specifically identified needs. What measurable improvements will result from the activity? How much of the need will be addressed? Define the direct and indirect outcomes that will result from the project. Identify quantitative and qualitative measures to determine that the outcomes are achieved.

*Completing the Housing Production Plan and Market Study will provide the Town invaluable guidance as it moves forward implementing the Master Plan. Currently, the Town assesses properties individually and on a relatively ad-hoc basis; with a plan, the Town will have accurate estimates of the need and type of housing to make informed decisions when acquiring property, rehabilitating existing housing, or developing new housing. As Amherst becomes more developed and closer to build-out, acquiring land for affordable housing becomes more competitive. A strategic plan will help the Town evaluate each property within the context of the needs of the community. Ultimately, the goal of the Housing Production Plan is to help the community increase its stock of affordable housing, either through rehabilitation or new construction. With the Plan, Amherst will be able to maintain, or improve, its current level of affordable housing, which exceeds 10% by DHCD's standards.*

## F. Evaluation

Goals & Assessments: Please explain your short-term goals and long-term goals. Describe the changes in the target population that indicate the program's success. How will these changes be measured? Will anticipated changes affect the municipality's responsibility to this target population? How will the impact of this service on individual clients be tracked over time? Will there be additional beneficiaries? Will this service enable clients to become self-sufficient? How is this service linked to other human/social service programs in the community?

*The Town's short and long-term goals, as identified in the Master Plan and Community Development Strategy, are to significantly increase the availability of affordable housing for low-and moderate-income households, and to diversify the type of housing in Amherst to meet the needs of other demographics—elderly, workforce housing, disabled individuals. This will only happen if the Town has a plan in place to coordinate the many efforts of staff, boards, committees, citizens, and land owners to develop affordable housing. A state-certified plan ensures that Amherst will be producing housing that is consistent with the Chapter 40B statute and regulations—the plan sets housing goals that must be achieved for the Town to remain certified.*

## G. Agency Information

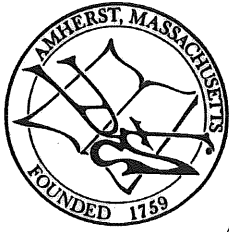
Please provide an overview of your organization, including length of time in existence, experience in successfully conducting activities for which funding is being sought, and skills and current services that reflect capacity for success.

*The Town offers high level government services, quality education, support for open space and agriculture, promotion of economic development, and respect for its history. Town government has been in existence for decades, with numerous departments and citizen boards and committees all working toward common goals that benefit its citizens and the community. Currently, Amherst has professional staff in all of its departments, in particular its Accounting, Conservation, Planning, and Public Works Departments who commonly work with consultants and property owners to manage and develop such projects as land acquisition, feasibility studies and assessments, development of engineering specifications, and construction projects ranging from public infrastructure to affordable housing. Town staff is competent with procurement regulations, balancing budgets, and efficiently managing contracts so that deliverables are received on time. The Office of Conservation and Development, who will be working closely with the consultant(s) to develop the Housing Production Plan and Market Study, is the same staff who*

- *managed and coordinated the Master Planning Process, which involved a two-year, multiphase contract for over \$200,000;*
- *worked with various boards and committees to initiate the development of Olympia Drive, a 40-unit, multi-million dollar affordable housing project;*

- *worked with consultants to conduct a build out analysis for the community in 2002; and*
- *commonly work with appraisers and consultants to develop feasibility studies, architectural plans and cost estimates for various projects.*

*Town of*



AMHERST

*Massachusetts*

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Amherst, MA 01002-2351

Housing Partnership/Fair Housing  
Committee  
(413) 259-3040  
(413) 259-2410 [Fax]

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Development Committee  
FROM: Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee (HP/FH)  
RE: Housing Production Plan and Market Study  
DATE: October 29, 2010

At its October 14, 2010 meeting the Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee (HP/FH) discussed the Town's 2011 CDBG application for a Housing Production Plan and Market Study for the Town of Amherst. The committee strongly supports this proposal because it accomplishes goals identified in the Master Plan, especially the need to increase housing opportunities in the community. Although the Town updated its Affordable Housing Plan in 2003, the document does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the demographics and housing trends in Amherst. The Housing Production Plan would provide the necessary information to help the community achieve its many goals related to affordable housing and providing a diversity of housing in town. The HP/FH supported a Housing Production Plan and Market Study using 2010 Census Data that includes a comprehensive market analysis and needs assessment, assessment of housing rehabilitation, workforce housing, low and moderate income housing, elderly housing, and housing for the homeless.

The HP/FH Committee appreciates your support of this project, as it increases accessibility in and around the Town Center.

Cc: HP/FH Committee Members  
Dave Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development